

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DACCA 03594 102058Z

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ACTION AID-59

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TAGS: EAID, EAGR, BG

SUBJ: USG FLOOD ASSISTANCE IN BANGLADESH

REF: A. DACCA 3559 B. DACCA 3428

BEGIN SUMMARY: WE ARE PREPARING TWO TYPES OF RECOMMENDED USG RESPONSES TO BQB APPEALS FOR FLOOD RELIEF: EMERGENCY PL-480, TITLE II PROGRAM, AND LONGER-TERM RELIEF PROJECTS WHICH WILL CONTRIBUTE TO BD DEVELOPMENT GOALS. OUR PL-480, TITLE II RECOMMENDATION FOLLOWS SEPTEL. THIS MESSAGE REQUESTS WASHINGTON REACTION TO OUR INITIAL THINKING RE SECOND TYPE OF RELIEF/ DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS. END SUMMARY.

1. WHILE IT ALREADY OBVIOUS THAT EMERGENCY RELIEF WILL BE REQUIRED TO MEET SITUATION CAUSED BY FLOOD, WE DO NOT WISH TO LOSE SIGHT OF LONG-RANGE DEVELOPMENT NEED WHICH OFFERS HOPE, OVER TIME, OF MOVING BANGLADESH OUT OF PRESENT SITUATION OF REPEATED CRISES. ACCORDINGLY, IN ADDITION TO TITLE II EMERGENCY RELIEF (SEPTEL), WE BELIEVE USG SHOULD ALSO OFFER RELIEF PROJECTS WHICH CAN SIGNIFICANTLY CONTRIBUTE TO DEVELOPMENT.

2. OTHERS SHARE THIS VIEW CONCERNING THE VALUE OF DEVELOPMENT-
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PAGE 02 DACCA 03594 102058Z

ORIENTED RELIEF PROJECTS. IN GENERAL, WE DETECT A CONSENSUS AMONG

DONORS (INCLUDING PRIVATE VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS-PVO'S) INDICATING STRONG ATTITUDE AGAINST ONCE AGAIN BECOMING INVOLVED IN ANY LARGE-SCALE RELIEF OPERATIONS TO EXTENT POSSIBLE. BANGLADESH HAS ONLY RECENTLY, AND SOME CONTEND BELATEDLY, TURNED ITS ATTENTION AWAY FROM RELIEF/REHABILITATION PROGRAMMING TO DEVELOPMENT, AND MOST MAJOR DONORS SEEM TO AGREE WE SHOULD KEEP BDG'S ATTENTION IN THIS LONGER-TERM PERSPECTIVE TO MAXIMUM EXTENT. IN GENERAL, COUNTRY TEAM SHARES THIS "RELIEF SYNDROME AVOIDANCE" VIEW OF OTHER DONORS. CONSEQUENTLY, WE INTEND TO EXPLORE WITH BDG AND PVO'S DEVELOPMENT-ORIENTED RELIEF MEASURES. EXAMPLES OF SUCH POTENTIAL PROJECTS ARE:

(A) PROVISION OF SEEDS. BDG PREPARING PROCURE AND TRANSPORT SEED TO STRICKEN AREAS FOR REPLACEMENT OF LOST CROPS AS WATERS RECEDE. US MIGHT ASSIST WITH FOREIGN OR DOMESTIC PURCHASE OF RICE, WHEAT OR VEGETABLE SEEDS AND/OR THEIR TRANSPORTATION AS DURING EARLY R/R PERIOD. FYI. WE HAVE BEEN INVITED TO BDG MEETING THIS AFTERNOON (AUGUST 9) WHERE WE EXPECT TO RECEIVE SOME SEED PROCUREMENT REQUEST. END FYI.

(B) FOOD FOR WORK. US MIGHT ASSIST WITH SIZABLE EMERGENCY FOOD OR CASH FOR WORK (HOPEFULLY MORE SOPHISTICATED THAN NORMAL TEST RELIEF) PROGRAMS IN HARDEST HIT AREAS TO SOAK UP INCREASED UNEMPLOYMENT AND REPAIR DAMAGED INFRASTRUCTURE. FYI. LOCAL CIDA REP INTERESTED IN WORKING WITH USAID ON DEVELOPING THIS IDEA. END FYI.

(C) COOPERATIVES. US MIGHT FINANCE OR AT LEAST TRY TO ENCOURAGE BDG TO ENHANCE COOPERATIVE ORGANIZATION EFFORTS THROUGH IRDP IN HARDEST HIT AREAS. COOPERATIVE PROGRAM EFFORTS IN RANGUNIA THANA, NOW ONE OF THE HIGHEST RICE PRODUCTION AREAS OF SOUTHEASTERN BANGLADESH, BEGAN IN '68 AS RESULT SERIOUS FLOODS IN AREA. RANGUNIA RURAL DEVELOPMENT WORKERS TOOK ADVANTAGE OF DISASTER TO RAPIDLY ORGANIZE FARMERS. USAID'S MODERATELY SUCCESSFUL R/R GRANT TO WORLD RELIEF COMMISSION WAS DONE ALONG THESE LINES PERHAPS INDICATING PVO'S COULD TAKE ON SUCH A ROLE.

(D) MATERNAL FEEDING. CARE, IN CONSULTATION WITH UNICEF, CONTACTING BDG TO DISCUSS EMERGENCY FEEDING PROGRAMS IN SYLHET/ MYMENSINGH AREA. US MIGHT SUPPORT EMERGENCY FEEDING PROGRAM OF SHORT DURATION IN HARDEST HIT AREA, FOLLOWED BY RAPID DE-ESCALATION AND SUBSEQUENT MOUNTING OF A MORE DIRECTED MATERNAL FEEDING PROGRAM.

3. OVER COMING WEEKS WE WILL BE WORKING WITH BDG IN EXPLORING SUCH DEVELOPMENT-ORIENTED (OTHER THAN FOOD) RELIEF SCHEMES. WE WELCOME LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 DACCA 03594 102058Z

WASHINGTON COMMENTS/IDEAS, GUIDANCE ON THESE OR OTHER SCHEMES.
DECONTROL AUGUST 9,
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